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The Black Cat

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JULY 1904

The Psychologist's Masterpiece.
J. Rowe Webster.

An Auto and an Autocrat.
Jasper Barnett Cowdin.

Kellen and Miss Van Wyck.
J. W. Scott.

The Wooing of Widow McCann.
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In Dead Man's Cañon.
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The Psychologist's Masterpiece.*

BY J. ROWE WEBSTER.

TO keep late hours when at college is the privilege of those who work, as well as of those who roister, and it should not, therefore, seem strange when I remark that it was half-past two in the morning before I closed my books. To my disgust, I was nervously wide awake — a fact which would make it necessary for me to take a walk in the open air before turning in, if I wished to get any sleep before the examination on the morrow. There was absolutely no help for it, and, a few moments afterward, the night had received me into its keeping. A lonely pedestrian, I walked up the middle of the straight town road that went past the dormitory where I had my room.

The air was as nipping and eager as it was on that wonderful night at Elsinore when the Ghost appeared to Hamlet. I had not been out five minutes before I found a zest in the walk, which I had looked forward to as such an irksome duty, and, as my tired eyes became braced to activity by that peculiarly clean sensation of intense cold, I looked about me. The snow and the moon together made the night like some glorious transfiguration of noonday.

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I peered ahead of me, along the broad, straight highway. At first it seemed to be clear for its entire length, but, as I continued to gaze in order to fix upon some tree or post by the roadside, which should serve as a goal before I turned back to the dormitory, I became aware of a black figure in the distance — evidently some other lonely night-wanderer, who, like myself, might have been sitting up over his books in preparation for the test next day. I hurried my pace and, as the other was coming on at a fair gait, we rapidly approached each other.

To my surprise, as the other man came near and went past me, I noted the following facts, as best I could in the moonlight: He was not young, but was an elderly individual with bushy gray whiskers and gray hair, which fluffed out from under the rim of a silk hat, pulled down hard below the normal hat-line. On his feet were rubber boots, that came up as far as the knee, and his hands, as he passed me at a slow dog-trot, were thrust into the side-pockets of a square-cut jacket, which in front was closely buttoned about his spare body, and which at the sides was held in snug by the pressure of his elbows. His whole appearance was so unusual that, after he had passed me, I stopped and watched him turn down a side street, to disappear behind the neighboring corner house. His figure was slender, his step light, and his coming and going had been practically noiseless. I had not been able to get much of a view of his face, for he had continually kept his eyes upon the ground. He had not once altered his pace, and had turned the corner with a methodical air which suggested that his mode of taking exercise was not an unusual one. Altogether, there had been something of deep pathos about his entire bearing. It was as if a lonely old gentleman in his declining years had watched the college athletes taking their daily sprint up and down the street before his windows, had realized that his own physical education had been neglected, and had made up his mind to solace himself with a regular, nocturnal trot round the neighborhood — at a time when few would see him, and when nobody would be in a humor to laugh at him.

I finished my walk, slept well, and on the next day wrote a good examination. Then, in the afternoon, as my head felt tired, I took a rest by doing something which I had long been meaning

to do — I made a call on a classmate of my father who lived in town, and to whom I had from my father a letter of introduction. This letter, to my shame be it spoken, was grimy with the dust of my desk, in which it had been reposing for the better part of three years.

Dr. Burton was at home, and glad to see me in spite of my gross delinquency, which he had human nature enough perfectly to understand. After a fashion, his ready comprehension was to me a matter of regret, for I had expected to see a crusty old fogy, whereas I now found in Dr. Burton a highly entertaining talker, well abreast of the times, and I was sorry not to have made his acquaintance before. It was the old story — "Young men think that old men are fools; but old men know that young men are."

Before I had talked with the Doctor long, I remembered my little experience of the night before and, hoping that he might enlighten me with regard to the habits of a fellow-townsman, I told him about the elderly gentleman who had been running about the streets, so long after curfew time, accoutred in silk hat and rubber boots.

The Doctor's cheery countenance grew sad, as he folded his hands across his gently swelling paunch.

"Poor Dexter!" — he said — "Poor Dexter! — it's too bad — altogether too bad."

He was silent a few moments, and then, quite simply, he took out his handkerchief and wiped his eyes. The unaffected action somehow made my own eyes moisten.

"I beg your pardon," I remarked, "I didn't think that he might possibly be intimately known to you."

"No more he is — no more he is! — that is to say, he hasn't been lately. But thirty years ago he was one of my best friends."

Again Dr. Burton was silent, as he tapped his two fore-fingers together in a fit of abstraction. Suddenly he asked — "Would you like to hear the story?"

"I certainly would."

"Well, sir, the man you saw last night was Dexter Belknap, who has always been known here in town, though not among you young chaps of today, as Professor Belknap. Thirty years ago he held the chair of philosophy here in college. He lectured well,

and was liked by the students, but he had not held the position long before the faculty began to look down upon him, because his especial hobby was to pursue private investigations in psychology — a department of study then considered unworthy of a serious man's attention. Many and many a time, however, Belknap would come in here of an evening, and hold me spell-bound as he told the results of other investigators as well as of his own theories and experiments. 'Some day' — he would say — 'Some day the college here will give psychology the attention which it deserves.' And now, of course, his prophecy has been fulfilled — but without his knowledge, poor fellow! That is part of the tragedy.

"As I was about to say, Belknap was especially interested in two classes of mental phenomena — dreams and the memory. And one night, during the course of our conversation, he said that his latest efforts had been spent on certain relationships between the two. Among other points, he called my attention to the fact that we not infrequently have dreams which are surprisingly vivid, while we are dreaming them, but which we find it impossible to remember after we awake. If you dream much, you probably have had the experience yourself. You think that you will remember an interesting dream, and, with that in view, as you come to your senses, you try to seize hold of a few vivid incidents in it as a handle to all the rest — only to find, a few moments later, that the whole thing is in fragments, and that the handle is broken off as well.

"Belknap had much to say that was reasonable enough concerning the reasons for such lapses of memory, but when he declared that, as a result of his special inquiry, it would be possible to write a story which should be vividly interesting, but which should, at the same time, throw the reader into such a state of mind that he would not be able to tell what the story was about after finishing it — when Belknap made that ridiculous assertion — I laughed at him. But he repeated his statement, and even maintained that, just as one repeatedly dreams the same dream, and remembers that it is the same while he is dreaming it, only to wake up and find he has forgotten it, as he always has forgotten it before, so it would be possible to write a story impossible to remember even though repeatedly perused.

"I stumped him to write such a yarn, and he left that night promising to make the attempt. Nay, he was fairly wild to make it.

"On the day after that call of his — he had come to bid me good-bye — I went off on a trip to Germany for a special course of study, and did not get back for nearly a year. Meanwhile, I had forgotten all about our conversation. Belknap was no correspondent, and hadn't written to me even once. But I was hardly back again when one of my patients, old John Pettigrew, asked me whether I had read Belknap's story. I said no, and asked Pettigrew when and where it had been published — for Belknap occasionally had things published by the magazines. Pettigrew replied that it was still in manuscript — he had read it one day in Belknap's study.

"'What was it like?' I asked.

"'Well, now, Doctor,' he said, 'that's where you have me. You know my memory isn't so good as it used to be, and I'm sorry to say that I can't remember a word of it. All I know is that I enjoyed reading it immensely. It was mighty fine.'

"As Pettigrew said this, I suddenly remembered what Belknap had asserted that night before I left, and how I had stumped him to put his theory into practice, and immediately I began to wonder whether old John Pettigrew's lapse of memory were merely a matter of chance, or whether he actually had been hoodwinked by a thought-juggler.

"Since Belknap himself was away on a summer vacation, at a place within calling distance of the lady to whom he had been for over a year engaged, I sought my sister in the hope of answering my query, and asked her whether she had seen any story, still in manuscript, written by our friend the professor.

"'Why, yes,' she answered, 'Dexter did write a story, and sent it the rounds of the club.' (By that meaning a little book-club which we belonged to at the time.)

"'Was it a good story?'

"'Oh, capital! capital! so absorbing that it nearly took my breath away. Dexter surpassed himself, I tell you. I never have read anything like it — it was wonderful.'

"'What was it all about?'

"'Oh, I can't stop to tell you now. You will see it in a week or two, when it has gone the rounds of the club. It is to come to you then — Dexter wrote to that effect on the cover.'

"'But can't you give me some inkling of what it was about?'

"My sister paused in her work — she was cutting a dress — and thought a moment. Then she said:

"'Well, that certainly is strange! You will have to wait for the thing itself — I have completely forgotten it!'"

Dr. Burton paused and communed with himself, as if loath to proceed. Then he went on: —

"With some impatience, I awaited the delivery of the manuscript into my hands. When it had come, I sat down to it at ten o'clock in the evening, and read continuously for five hours. I was spell-bound. I have read good stories in my day, but really this tale of Belknap's went far beyond anything I have ever read."

"And did the author make good his claims?"

"He most certainly did. To my overwhelming chagrin, I found, after reading the story through, that I could not remember one word of what I had been reading. When I realized that such was the case, I picked it up and read it again — yes, sir, into the very day — into breakfast time. It had the same interest and the same result. Beyond the fact that I knew it was brimming over with life and death, and love and struggle, and self-sacrifice and mystery, I could remember nothing. All my efforts to recollect specific points were in vain. The mere cold generalization with regard to its superlative excellence alone remained.

"My sense of discomfiture was so strong — for I have always prided myself on my tenacious memory — that I did not say a word to anybody. I alone, you see, realized that there was anything unusual about the matter. Though each member of our little book-club had read the story with great interest, and had forgotten it, their minds did not dwell with any curious wonder on their own forgetfulness. With me it was a matter of rebellious amazement. Not a single paragraph, nay, not a single sentence, would stick by me, no matter how often I read or re-read it. The story seemed to throw me into a dreamy kind of stupor as often as my thoughts concerned themselves with it. Not a paragraph, not a sentence, when read by itself, had any sense at all.

Only when I began at the beginning and read several continuous paragraphs was any impression made upon the mind — a vivid impression, yet immediately forgotten, inasmuch as whenever I consciously paused in my reading, I not only forgot what I had perused, but could not even make sense of what came afterwards. It was the strangest experience in the world.

"Finally I wrote to Belknap, acknowledged that I had been utterly baffled, and advised him to submit the story to a publishing house. He did so, but not to a rich enough, or wide-awake enough firm. They offered him ten thousand dollars, which he refused to take, because he considered his work worth more to the trade, if it was worth anything at all. Twenty-five thousand was the price which he asked. The story was accordingly sent back to him. The publishing house did not seem to realize that what they had struck was a great bonanza, if it was anything, and not ore of a low grade. However, he would be able to sell it elsewhere for his own price — I was sure of that.

"I was more than glad that Belknap had produced such a masterpiece, for I had happened to hear, on good authority, that he was not to be kept in his position at college any longer, and, as he was a poor man and a proud one, and was waiting for such an addition to his income as should allow him to be comfortably married, fame and cash would come in most opportunely — as they usually do. What a gloating triumph it would be, even for a man not disposed to gloat, to prove to a sceptical, sneering faculty that one's researches in psychology were not necessarily the frivolous meanderings of a trickle of weak thought!

"When I next saw Belknap, however, I was shocked.

"'What's the matter, Dexter?' I asked.

"He moaned and shook his head.

"'I am a ruined man!' he said, 'an irreparably ruined man!'

"'Why, my dear boy!' I cried, 'never mind the loss of your position. When your story is published, you will be rich — for you — and famous enough for anybody. Think of it! The college will have to take you back on your own terms in order to get back its self-respect!'

"Still he shook his head. 'I have lost my story,' he moaned. 'It was thrown into the fire by a careless housemaid!'

"To me the matter seemed trifling. 'Re-write it,' I cried.

"'Dear Jack, you don't seem to understand! I have completely forgotten it myself, and, what is worse, I have completely forgotten the principles on which it was constructed. It required the most concentrated, the most delicate work of the brain to think my theory out. I did not commit it to paper, as that seemed unnecessary when the problem was once achieved. But to learn that I was discharged from the college which I had tried to serve so faithfully — that shock! — why, it was as if you had thrown a stone at a delicate engine made entirely of glass. Not only has my memory played me the trick which I have played on all of you — the juggler deceived by his own juggling — but also that part of my brain, that working engine, with which I composed both my story and my theory, has been irretrievably injured. I can neither write that story again, nor another like it!'

"Belknap's gesture of despair was pitiful to witness. Fame — fortune — happiness in love — completeness of mind — all gone at one stroke! He grew rapidly worse — there does seem to be such a thing, you know, as paralysis of the will itself — and the only thing that has kept him going so long has been the midnight exercise he has taken these thirty years."

"And the lady to whom he was engaged?" I asked.

"Married him, and has supported him ever since — she is a plucky woman!"

"And is there no hope of his recovery?"

For a moment, Dr. Burton did not answer. Then again he murmured — "Poor Dexter! — he sent for me this morning about half-past ten. When I reached the bedside, he was unconscious. Suddenly, however, he raised himself up and clutched my arm. His face was radiant.

"'Bring me paper and ink — bring me paper and ink!' he called, in an ecstasy of delight — 'I remember it all now — I can write it again!' — and then ——"

"And then, what?"

"He died," said Dr. Burton.

An Auto and an Autocrat.*

BY JASPER BARNETT COWDIN.

THE big white steamer *Pontiac* was churning up the rippled blue of Lake Erie, on her way from the Straits to Ogdensburgh. The day was superb for September, with the balminess of June in the air, and a faint breeze ruffling the water just enough to give the sunbeams a dance. Yellow butterflies fluttered across the vessel's bow with airy unconcern, though no land was in sight; and with nonchalant bravado the sparrows ventured wherever a sail was visible, bent on pirating the grain scattered along the decks.

Although well filled with summer tourists on their way back from Duluth and the Pictured Rocks, none were out on the decks of the *Pontiac* enjoying the ideal afternoon save one — a beautiful girl — and she in the utmost danger! The absence of her fellow-passengers could be accounted for by the clatter of dishes coming from the cabin.

The first person to appear in the shadow of the doorway was Malcolm Elliot. What he saw from there transformed the genial lines of his face to the frozen rigidity of consternation.

Away up in the sharp bow of the boat, perched on the narrow rail, her Sorosis Oxfords resting on the board seat below and one arm thrown carelessly about an upright support of the canvas awning, sat a pretty girl gowned in white, and hatless, the bronze ripples of hair blown about her oval face. The lazy lullaby of the water at the prow had done its work — she was fast asleep! The slightest start of waking, and the girl would undoubtedly fall overboard. The two officers up in the pilot house noticed her peril at the same moment that Malcolm advanced to her rescue. At the cabin door were already gathered a group of people with frightened faces.

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"Be careful there, young man!" called the senior officer from the deck above; "move up quietly, and put your arm behind her."

Malcolm followed the caution, and gently drew the yielding form down to safety. What a pity the sweet thrill of having her in his arms could not be prolonged! The translucent eyelids wavered, and a pair of magnificent brown-green eyes met his interested gaze. Her lips began a question, but immediately a circle of excited people closed in, forming a storm-centre of conflicting interjections, amid which Malcolm suddenly found himself some sort of a hero, and Varina Brentwood dimly understood that her life had somehow been "saved" by the modest young stranger.

Malcolm considered the incident a great stroke of luck, as for two days his eyes had followed with admiration the flitting figure of Miss Brentwood. Furthermore, after such an experience the usual social conventions are turned aside, and during the conversation that followed, shared in by Miss Brentwood's parents, it transpired that Mr. Brentwood held business relations with Malcolm's father. This auspicious discovery had much to do also with winning over a keen-witted and watchful mamma.

So, with good fortune swelling his sails, Malcolm spent an ideal afternoon in the company of Miss Brentwood, skirting the siren-haunted shores of Love.

At two o'clock the following morning the steamer reached Port Colborne, the southern entrance to the Welland Canal, where her heavy cargo of flour was unloaded, thus lightening her for the trip through the locks to Lake Ontario.

Before breakfast the passengers were out on deck, eager to get a sight of land again, but the broad blue sweep of the lake, with its crisp air and sense of freedom, was gone, and in its place came a feeling of contraction as the vessel steamed lazily along the narrow thread of land-locked water across a monotonous country. Beyond the "Fourteen Mile Level" the hills began to appear and the locks to grow frequent.

When the steamer reached Thorold a string of automobiles stood in waiting, the chauffeurs offering for a trifle to convey the passengers to Niagara Falls and return. There was ample time for the trip, as the *Pontiac* had reached the brow of a long hill

which would require hours for its descent through the stairway of locks to the valley below.

Many of the tourists hailed with delight this opportunity of getting away for a time from their cramped quarters, and, amid laughter and a flutter of white, they were whisked away.

Malcolm and Miss Brentwood occupied a seat in the last surrey of the gay procession, while in front sat Miss Applewhite, a friend of Varina, with her fiancé, Sidney Lane.

The bracing ozone of September and the shifting foliage, already taking on its glory of red and gold, imparted zest and enthusiasm to the party. After taking in the customary sights about the Horseshoe Falls and along the Canadian Gorge, they turned back in a satisfied state of mind.

Malcolm had tipped off the chauffeur to "take it easy," and the auto soon dropped behind the rest. As for Miss Brentwood's beauty, it was simply radiant, set off by a poppy-red gown of transparent flimsiness, and as she and Malcolm occupied the rear seat, quite safe from observation, they took little note of the constantly changing panorama of wood and field, gazing rather at the scenery in each other's eyes. A thrill of something very akin to love electrified the stalwart young man's frame in the tender intervals when Varina's tiny hand pressed his arm, directing attention to some particularly interesting object.

Miss Applewhite and her fiancé on the front seat were also sufficiently interested in each other, but occasionally they threw back a glance or a laughing comment.

Suddenly, from a wayside thicket, sprang out a man who, taking a stand in the middle of the road, waved his arms frantically.

The auto, of course, came to an abrupt stop.

"In the name of Joshua, son of Giddash, throw up your hands!" commanded the stranger, pointing a six-shooter with one hand, while the other clasped what appeared to be a Bible.

There was nothing for it but to comply.

Those fine spirits who can detect a subtle affinity existing between Zionism and collar buttons would have put the stranger down at once as a man of the cloth. His broad-brimmed soft hat, severe black bow and loose-fitting black suit were certainly minis-

terial, but the diamond ring on the index finger, the mammoth silver chain and the over-fancy footwear would leave the matter in doubt with conservative people. The dark eyes under his heavy brows scanned the occupants of the surrey searchingly.

"You, young man, in the brown clothes, with the gray Fedora — you in the back there — are you married to that young woman sitting beside you?"

The gleaming Colt was on a line with Malcolm's idea-cage.

"Not that I am aware of," was the forced reply.

"Well, sir, as for President Roosevelt and his theories of race suicide, I must confess myself heartily in sympathy with him. Fashionable people like you, that can marry but won't marry, ought to be made to marry, and that's my mission on this earth. Yes, people, I'm not only an ordained minister of the gospel, but also a bold speculator in wild oats. So please stand up, join your right hands on high, and follow me as I repeat the words of the ceremony."

Between terror and amusement the young ladies were on the verge of hysterics, but the ungloved hand of the reluctant bride came in conjunction with Malcolm's warm palm.

"We might better humor him," whispered the groom; "you can see that he is off."

"How about you two in the front there?" demanded the clergyman; "seems to me this ought to be a double wedding."

"Oh, we are already married!" exclaimed Miss Applewhite, her quick wit saving the situation from further intricacies.

"Very well; you can act as witnesses."

And with the entire group standing in their places, and the six-shooter carefully covering them, the reverend bandit repeated from memory, and without a break, the marriage form in use among the clergy of the Methodist denomination.

"Excuse me if I omit to salute the bride," he said politely, at the conclusion of the service, "but I congratulate you, young man, on securing such a beautiful wife, and you, young lady, on the possession of so handsome a husband. All that remains now is to jot down your names and addresses on a slip of paper, pin it to the customary fee, and drop it in the road. I will mail you the certificate in due time."

No ordinary highwayman would have allowed Malcolm to fumble in his pockets for a sheet of paper, but, as a matter of fact, the entire party was unarmed. The directions, however, were promptly followed, the names of "John Smith, Beirut, Syria," and "Helen Nimrod, Kalkaska, Vt.," being duly set down. The paper was then fastened to a five-dollar bill and dropped beside the auto.

With a profound bow the outlaw motioned the chauffeur to proceed, and as the vehicle turned a bend in the road he picked up the precious papers and disappeared within the thicket.

At first the victims of this exciting farce were disposed to treat it as a good joke, but as the question was discussed pro and con, it began to assume a more serious aspect. All were densely ignorant of the law concerning such a case, but had read some disturbing court decisions in regard to mock marriages. And what if the outlaw were a truly ordained minister?

"Oh! do you really think we are legally married?" implored Miss Brentwood, a look of consternation in her pretty eyes.

"By the son of Giddash, I don't know," laughed Malcolm, a trifle uneasily.

The girl settled back in her seat, and became thoughtfully quiet for the remainder of the trip.

The auto overtook the *Pontiac* in the last lock at the foot of the hill. The boat had settled until her upper deck was on a level with the tow-path, and Mrs. Brentwood, standing at the edge, stepped ashore to greet her daughter. Varina sank into her arms with a sudden little sob.

"Mamma, I — I — don't know but what I'm married."

"Married! What on earth do you mean?" questioned the alarmed parent, glancing instinctively at Malcolm, who was standing meekly by, holding the wraps.

"I mean — I don't know — I can't tell — whether I'm married or not," finished Varina brokenly.

After this lucid explanation, Mrs. Brentwood looked more mystified than ever, but her portly spouse, who joined the group just then, soon got the facts straightened out.

"I hope we won't have to drag this thing into the courts," he said.

"The courts!" echoed his wife, who had a wholesome horror of such places, "what a disgrace to fall on our family!"

"I think Varina and I can arrange it much better," suggested Malcolm quietly, giving the girl, who was blushing furiously, a side smile. "We have reached an understanding, and with your approval will be married over again in a strictly conventional manner."

To see the happy little coterie gathered in the cabin half an hour later one would not need to be a prophet to foretell a dainty church wedding after the arrival of the steamer at Ogdensburgh.

Kellen and Miss Van Wyck.*

BY J. W. SCOTT.

HE Southern Pacific Railroad and Rogue River come down the winding gorges of southern Oregon running abreast like wolves on a blood trail by paths that shuffle in and out and cross and re-cross as they drive to the south, ever to the south; and wherever the road sweeps over the river on a bridge the water tugs at the piers to bring it down; and year by year the sweating engines of many thundering trains hoot derision at the turbulent son of the mountains raging with foam on his lips.

Kellen's division was in this part of the world. He was a conductor, and as he punched tickets from Mokuhlteno to Skybelt and from Skagland to Kitswitch he forgot about how the river ran and clutched at the feet of his firewagon, and inwardly cursed the monotony of things and the aridness of life, and prayed a change. He was of the kind of men who take too much interest in too many women. There is always trouble in that, but there is not always a tragedy in the bottom of the bag. His wife had blue eyes, and while she was growing a little bit faded, there was a pathetic, babyish sweetness in her face that would have nailed some men to the foot of her throne throughout the day and the night of all time. But Kellen wanted fire, evidently. The pathos and the babyishness and the sweetness probably wearied him.

When Miss Van Wyck tripped on the coach step and gave him a smile for aid received, out of black eyes burning in a pale face a trifle strained and worn looking, there is no question but what the watcher of men's lives recorded the arrival on the road he traveled of a woman of interest to him. Miss Van Wyck had red hair of the rich shadow and gold kind, and though the milky cheeks were a bit gaunt and the chin prominent, there was a

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flaring sparkle in the great black eyes, and majesty in the well-held shoulders and long limbs when she walked.

Kellen owed Miss Van Wyck to the gods of the public school — they led her into the region that knew him. She taught school at Nesqualmie, and when she took up the birch rod there she elevated the window blind and noted down Kellen's train as a means of escape, as it whirred along the river bank by the black water and ripped up the valley.

When she donned the robe of office she did not say, "Here are many little ones to me given that I may mold them into fine vessels as the potter shapes the clay; and that is enough." No. She said, "This place is lonely. I see no young men here. What a vile wilderness."

Nesqualmie was beautiful in the summer. But that was not enough. She was not filled with delight because Shasta, the great white mountain, swam ever in the blue air and little white snow devils chased themselves up and down its frozen sides. The big yellow water lilies, rocked on the pools in the hollow places, were disregarded by her, and the martial song of the Rogue, as it swirled by the door, drooling and sputtering where black, needle-pointed rocks stood up, and leering at the railroad, was as little to her as the swish of the wind in the cedars. She did not know that the ruck of the mountain ranges green-clad and marching in solid ranks to his foot, made obeisance and did homage to old Shasta as their king, nor that the warm mountain side upon which Nesqualmie nestled threw its fir and cedar woods around the village as a mother wraps her arms about a child; nor did it count with her that the air was sweet as nectar, the sky blue as sapphire, and the sunlight streaming through the forest on the heights like shimmering golden hair. Not at all.

She knew that she had to ride alone in the summer afternoons, and that the birds and the squirrels chattered horribly; and that the loneliness struck upon her nerves and made her start at shadows. Wherefore she was very much dissatisfied.

Then, in the winter, a gray mist of rain hangs over the Nesqualmie hills, and the woods drip with water, and the Rogue boils and dances, and whirls the rotten logs along to the sea. That was a viler time for Miss Van Wyck than the summer. It was

muggier and more cheerless, and fuller of the hideous, disheartening spectres of bad day dreams.

But she fell upon the device of going up the road to Potlace, which was almost a town, and possessed a few joys in the way of some women friends and a fresh face once a year perhaps. These flights were made Friday evenings after the children went home for the week, and the home comings befel Sunday nights, so she would be ready for school on Monday morning.

After it had become Kellen's unrighteous custom to stop at her seat, and look into her face, and grin and say something pretty in a voice too low to be caught by the other passengers, the flights got to be regular. And thus there grew up something between them. If you had observed her closely, you would have seen that she watched for him after she took her seat, looking expectantly forward whenever the coach door opened, and that a faint blush put warmth in her white cheeks, and a look sprang into her eyes when he came down the aisle.

Once when she was riding beside the railroad, in the hills, a train broke suddenly around a curve and frightened the colt she rode — a small, compact, sorrel devil, made up of nerves and beautified by white stockings and a snow star on his forehead. The colt bolted sidewise across a brook at the roadside into the woods like a yellow flash; and she instantly turned him round and brought him back to the road, and kept him facing the train till it passed, sitting like a graven image while he danced, a sharp, glint in her eyes and a high color in her cheeks. Kellen witnessed the performance, and he afterwards told her about it with enthusiasm, dwelling upon his admiration with emphasis.

It may be he forgot about his wife in talking about this and kindred subjects. It does not matter. He did forget about her, and about the vows pledged at the church when she was not so faded; and he made a plan to help Miss Van Wyck kick the dust of Nesqualmie from her shoes forever.

They fixed up between them to go away from Oregon secretly; and he quietly wound up his few business affairs and drew all the money he had in bank. Their plan was to meet in the evening a few miles above Nesqualmie, and from there ride away on horseback together. Miss Van Wyck was to station herself in the

woods by the railroad at a grade-foot where his train slackened speed, and he was to drop off the train covertly when it should pass, take the horse she should bring for him, and ride with her thirty miles through the night and the woods to the Oregon coast. Then they were to make Seattle by steamer and train, and go East. Once East they should plan further. For one thing, Miss Van Wyck would thereafter have an escort when she went riding, and she would not have to endure the depressing rain clouds hanging over the Nesqualmie hills. When Mrs. Kellen should see fit to give Kellen a divorce, they would be married. Kellen gave his wife no hints, but left the blow to fall upon her without warning. He wanted his scheme to succeed and to avoid hindrances, and was therefore very cautious.

They selected Friday evening for their departure, notwithstanding the evil devil that presides over that day, because Miss Van Wyck would not be inquired for till Monday morning, when the children should return to school, and that would give them a big start. She told the horse owner of the village from whom she hired the horses that she was going riding down the river to Ballerton with a friend who would call for her at the house where she dwelt — that she had time to make the proper arrangements, while he had not — and accordingly the horses were left at her door.

The owls were hooting in the shadows when she reached the rendezvous at the grade-foot, and the river was growling among the willows. Her nerves were on razor edge when Kellen's train went by, and back among the trees, she jerked her restless horse's bobbing head with aimless and unreasoning viciousness.

But Kellen did not get off as the train skurried along puffing and flashing its lights. Miss Van Wyck sat waiting on her horse a long while, staring after the train and biting her lips, while her heart variously fluttered and sank and stood still. The gloom of the woods increased and was imparted to her soul. She waited stoically for an hour, hopelessly and wonderingly, and then turned toward Nesqualmie.

A quarter of a mile above the trysting spot the Rogue runs between narrow shores like a mad river, and a railroad bridge crosses it there. As the train drew near the bridge, Kellen was

seen to go out on the platform and look ahead, according to a custom of his. Later the forward brakeman missed him, and he was found no more upon the train.

Down the river a mile from where he should have dropped off to join Miss Van Wyck with an eager smile on his face, the river spreads out suddenly over a flat in shallows, and here there was a ford leading back to Nesqualmie. Miss Van Wyck rode through the fir trees under the moonlight to this spot, and there she saw something in the river close to the bank, half in and half out of the willow shadows. It was going round and round slowly in an eddy, and its white face was turned up to the moon. No doubt it looked ghastly, for when she galloped into Nesqualmie half an hour later, she was raving and wringing her hands in a state of hysteria. Her nerves had been seriously shocked, and as she swayed and shook in the saddle it was gathered out of her incoherent moanings and self-reproaches that something was wrong at the ford.

Some men went out there, and there they recovered Kellen's body from the river; and they picked up the horse that had been led for him, browsing along the road. Afterward, it was found that a signboard on a post that stood close to the railroad track at the bridge where he disappeared had been twisted half around. It was thought that he leaned too far out and struck that, which was criminally close to the track; and it is probable that at the time when Miss Van Wyck was waiting for him in the grisly timber with parted lips and heaving breast, he was washing heedlessly by, his ears deaf and his eyes blind, in the current of the Rogue.

The horse owner and the nurse who attended Miss Van Wyck through the fever that followed the hysteria, and listened to her delirious babble, furnished information that patched out her story. Kellen was buried at Mokuhlteno, where his wife lived, and no one whispered anything to his wife about Miss Van Wyck; so the fading little woman, with the pathos-charged eyes of blue, grieved over him sincerely. The funeral took place while Miss Van Wyck was delirious, and Kellen was some time in his grave when she recovered. This saved her pain, because she could not have gone to the funeral had she been well, being unknown to his

wife, and having no recognized ground of acquaintance with him that would have justified it. As soon as she was well she resigned her school and hurried away from Nesqualmie. She now teaches school in the south of California in a bare, flat region where the sun shines all the time. She cannot endure rain, nor clouds, nor mountains, nor woods — and running water in the moonlight turns her sick and shuddering.

The Wooing of Widow McCann.*

BY FRANK H. MAYER.

S was to be logically expected from a descendant of kings, the Widow faithfully conserved all the good old traditions in her own person, and was conformably fair, fat and forty.

What was more to the point with the eligibles of Fort Apache — and these included every man of the post's six hundred, barring the grouty old Colonel himself and two or three muchly-married subalterns who were consistently out of the running — she was sole possessor in her own right of some forty odd thousand dollars which the late lamented Barney McCann had rolled together in his ten years' sinecure as post trader. With the consent of the Department, and at the insistence of the whole camp, she likewise retained the aforesaid lucrative position, delegating its actual hard work to a faithful servitor, a superannuated old artillery comrade of Barney named Tim Walsh, whom she alternately petted and abused, after the manner of widows the world over.

To the older veterans of the command she was still the same saucy, blue-eyed, rosy-cheeked Katy O'Brien — only a bit riper and plumper belike — who had wrought dire havoc with their peace of mind seventeen years agone, when she first came to Apache as waiting maid to the Colonel's wife. The whole camp had gone into mourning when, on the death of her much beloved mistress, she had accepted material consolation from Barney, and as unanimously shed its weeds when, after six years of irreproachable wifehood, the random bullet of a drunken Indian made her the richest widow in Arizona.

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That was three years ago and, despite the unceasing assaults upon her heart, she still kept the citadel, routing the amorous warriors, horse, foot and dragoons, at every passage. There was many a brave man at Apache, but of the whole lot there was never a one who made the second essay at Barney's succession. Some of them came away with anger flaming in their eyes; some with downcast faces and shame-flushed cheeks; but the majority — and these included the older and more philosophical or mayhap calloused fellows — came from her presence with deprecating smiles which always enlisted sympathy and vinous consolation from predecessors.

For the sharpness of the Widow's tongue and the incisiveness of her sarcasm had long been a post proverb, and like all good soldiers the men of Apache knew their just deserts. Old Tim Walsh would shake his head sagely and instinctively set the bottle handy whenever he marked an unusual amount of pipe-clay in the furbishment of some caller. Tim knew the symptoms from long experience and had a certain infallability in his deductions. As a curious matter of fact it may here be observed that he invariably filled the bottle; there are some emotions that beget abstraction in men, and business is business!

To but one man alone in Apache was the Widow all honied complaisance. That was the old Colonel, whom she loved just a shade less devotedly than she had her idolized mistress, his wife. He would come over in the evenings betimes to chat with her about the only woman whom the world had ever held for him, and often protested in his gentle, kindly way against her strange intolerance of other men.

"There are many gentlemen among my boys, Katy," he said one night; "men worthy of your best consideration. Surely you do not intend to remain single for the rest of your life? You are too young, too affectionate in disposition, too domestic in your affiliations for that. Don't take offense, my dear, at an old friend's solicitude, but your very wealth is begetting large cares and responsibilities rather onerous for a woman to shoulder. Of course I appreciate that Barney was a good husband, but, er — there are many likely fellows —"

"Yes!" said the Widow quietly, "I know all that, Colonel.

They're all 'likely' enough, as you say — they'd all like to dip into Barney's gold cup, bad cess to them! Let me ask you," with rising choler, "if there's a man jack of your 'gentleman' officers who would take a second look at me if I were in the wash-tub instead of the coupon-cutting business? And as to the common file, them as isn't beardless boys whom I'd be tempted to spank if they crossed me, are old drunken campaigners with not enough ambition in them to get out of the army and earn a decent living. There isn't one of them that isn't afraid of me as it is! Barney *was* a good man — but a poor soft creature, as you know. I'm tired, Colonel, of twisting a man about my finger. If I ever marry again it will be a man that can rule me — and, saving your presence, I'd like to see the color of that lad's hair!"

When the Colonel had gone the Widow flounced irascibly into the store. "Tim," said she with a sharp acerbity, "if you ever let another of those philandering fools into my sitting-room I'll break with you for good. Mind that now! You glithering old omadhaun, do you think I am a beef contract, open to proposals for the whole army?" And Tim, being a wise man, held his peace and his job. Thereafter the Widow was immune from further affliction, Tim having confided with due discretion to certain officious familiars of his the Widow's expressed determination to *scald* the first man who had the temerity to approach her with a proposal. That was enough for the Apache Lovelaces. They could stand her throwing cold water upon their aspirations, but drew the line when it should boil!

Curiously enough, the cessation of their importunities was not attended by a corresponding increase in the Widow's complaisance. On the contrary, she grew more and more exacting and irritable until poor old Tim's nerves gave way and in a fit of desperation he mustered up courage enough one day to ask for his discharge from her service. He was greeted with such a hysteria of tearful reproach and upbraiding for his imputed ingratitude and disloyalty to "his old comrade's poor lone widow" that he positively grew eloquent in his retraction and retreated in bad disorder, getting subsequently drunk in his confusion, an indiscretion tactfully overlooked by the Widow despite her well-known and deeply seated personal antipathy to the flowing bowl.

"It bates the divil," confided Tim to the Colonel, "pwhat contrarieties will possess a woman whin she don't know pwhat she wants! Whin the bucks came pesterin' av her she was as hot as a brass Napoleon in action, and now that they've *quit* comin' she's a-spittin' fire like a Gatlin'. There's no understandin' a woman at all, at all! Me heart's broke wid her!" And the Colonel, reminiscently wise, nodded his fine iron-gray head in cogent sympathy and condescended to a second glass.

As the year wore on Tim's perplexity increased. The summer's fire dwindled into the autumnal ember glow and died out in the white ashes of winter, but the Widow's unaccountable resentment against the males of her species seemed to wax in proportion as the seasons waned. She grew cynical and embittered against the whole sex and never lost an opportunity of caustically scarifying all of its representatives who came into contact with her. The more timorously polite and deferentially courteous they became, the more vitriolic and exasperating her strictures anent their general unworthiness, until by spring men went out of their way to avoid the contingency of an encounter with her.

About this time the annual transfer of garrison was made and the "Fighting Seventh" came down from the snow-drifts of Dakota to relieve the Fourteenth, who were ordered East to replace some other regiment in turn. The newcomers were all veterans and in the short interim of communion afforded them by a delay in the outgoing detachment's transportation, soon became possessed of all the post's social data.

Now, six months of snow to the armpits does not necessarily make an anchorite of a man. Especially does this apply to the gallant "regulars," who for that unhallowed period of arduous deprivation never came within a hundred miles of a petticoat, and particularly applicable was it to Sergeant Pat Dickey, who had the reputation of being the hottest-blooded, hardest-fisted, deepest-drinking martinet of the whole standing army.

To him, a chance vision of the buxom Widow watching dress parade came as impressively as that last Sioux bullet had come out of the brush on Mad Water, four months back. Only this went deeper and the effect was permanent. He was hard hit, but, like the good soldier that he was, concealed his wound with

admirable fortitude and devoted himself with exaggerated solicitude to the business in hand. The Widow's eye rested upon him approvingly for a minute, for he was an exceedingly well built and thoroughly versed soldier — and the Widow was a connoisseur of good things military. Then she scowled disdainfully and her lips parted in a cynical sneer.

"A strapping rowdy like the rest of them!" she muttered. "Stuck on his shape and imagines everyone thinks he's a hero because he's got his arm in a sling. A sprain most likely from some drunken row at the canteen." Nevertheless, she looked at him again and noticed the bronze medals on his breast.

Dickey heard all about her in the barracks that night and shrewdly professed an indifference that passed muster admirably. "Rich, is she?" he yawned, kicking off his army brogans with professional dexterity into exactly the right position for morning inspection. "Then why the devil does she hang around this God-forsaken hole? Settin' her cap for shoulder-straps, eh?"

"Nothing of the kind!" said Meiggs, warmly. "She's turned down every officer in the camp and half the file, too, for that matter. Mebbe now" — with a covert fling at his listless auditor — "she might take a fancy to you if you could condescend to try your luck."

"Like as not!" was the laughing rejoinder as Dickey squared his cot covers with military exactitude and then turned and looked his man in the eye. "You know we fellows of the Seventh turned the trick that you duffers of the Fourteenth passed up at the Lava Beds. We might do it again here. I'll size her up and if she interests me I'll think over it."

Meiggs winced sharply at the insulting allusion, for it touched a sore spot, but his hand manfully unclenched as he looked at the bandaged arm. "For a winged bird you're a trifle frisky, my cock," he said quietly. "Take care that the Widow doesn't cut your comb with the rest," and "taps" just then put an end to the matter.

Dickey was among the first visitors to the sutler's store the next morning and betrayed no seeming concern when the Widow herself, in the temporary absence of old Tim, waited upon him. While she was wrapping up his trifling purchase he looked her

over with the critical scrutiny of a cavalry quartermaster scanning a new horse. "Fine color, clear eyes, good teeth, fair action; a bit thick in the barrel, but evidently sound in wind and limb. Plenty of 'go' in her, but she needs a firm hand on the bit and won't stand rowelling."

When this conclusion, subsequently expressed in barracks, reached the Widow in due course of time she was indignantly furious. "The impudent scalawag!" she stormed to herself. "To talk of me as though I were a mere cavalry hack — and in open barracks, too! A paltry, conceited, puffed-up nincompoop of a dismounted cavalryman! Just wait, my lad. It's your vanity you'll be carrying in a sling instead of your arm when I get through with you!" For the Widow had a telepathic intuition, somehow, that the Fates would be propitious to this end — the admiration in his eyes had been so insolently plain and unconcealed.

But her opportunity was long in offering. Womanlike, she nursed her wrath to the melting point, but the gallant Sergeant seemed utterly oblivious of it. He came and went his routine way in seeming unconsciousness of her existence except now and then to leer approvingly at her heightened color and pointed hauteur of carriage as she passed him with nose atilt and averted head. He was a deep man, this same Pat Dickey, and the Widow brindled up in impotent rage at consciousness of it. A remarkable thing in this connection was that she never once referred to him, even disparagingly, to Tim Walsh, who was unwisely loud in praise of Dickey's superior qualities.

"The handiest bhoy wid his fists that iver I see; the best shot and foinest rider in the ranks, and he drinks and pays loike a gintleman, more power to him!" was Tim's panegyric, but the Widow only snorted contemptuously and put her charming little snub nose more atilt.

Then, like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, came the memorable Apache uprising of '73. There was the same old inutile racing and chasing of the red-handed fiends after their murderous work was done, the protracted agony and suspense of their "round up" in the mountain fastnesses, and the Seventh rode wearily back on their captured mounts, a hundred less than when they had marched

forth. Their work was not completed either, for the "Kid" and his band of thirty odd renegades had warily eluded them and Pat Dickey, looking ruefully at the meagre remnant of the company he had led into the thick of the trouble, swore bitterly and would not be comforted. He was so abashed at their fluke that he even dropped his eyes when the Widow passed by and his insouciance fell from him like a mask in her presence.

Now was the Widow's chance and cruelly she improved it. "I thought," said she maliciously to Tim, one day in the store when Dickey was present, "that the Seventh were old Indian fighters. Sure and the 'Kid' made them look like a dirty deuce in a clean pack up there in the Superstitions. If we only had the Fourteenth back again they'd have that handful of Apaches tied to their stirrups in a fortnight! These fellows are a poor lot of sticks to have the fancy name they've got. They're much better drinking and brawling than they are at the fighting. Ah! well, well, but the times are changed. They used to have *soldiers* in the old days!"

A dull red crept slowly into Dickey's bronzed cheeks at her words, and the Widow's loquacity was sharply checked when he raised his eyes and looked at her. She had seen that cold blue glint before, but never as wickedly murderous as now. She was a bit frightened, but courageously managed an insulting titter as Pat set his teeth and without a word strode silently out of the store.

"There now, my bucko, we're even!" she muttered, but somehow her revenge was not quite sweet in her mouth. "I ought not have said that," she reflected in the seclusion of her own room that night. "They did the best they could and he left half his company out there. Well, I don't care! He brought it upon himself. I wonder who's a horse now, Mr. Dickey!"

The next day the Widow was impelled to an inspection of one of her mining properties some thirty miles out in the hills, and at the Colonel's insistance accepted a mounted escort from the post, the "Kid" being still an uncertain quantity. By a vagary of Fate it was Sergeant Pat Dickey with four men who was detailed for that duty, and it must be confessed that the Widow felt a comforting sense of security as she looked at the four stalwart troopers who rode superbly in her train. Her quick eye took in the well-

filled cartridge belts and the extra revolvers with which they were supplied, and her spirits rose to the occasion. She was abnormally gracious to them all, much to their bewilderment, and even Dickey unbent enough under the influence to smile occasionally at some merry sally. But, nevertheless, the far away, searching look never left his eyes and his vigilance was redoubled. He was on his mettle now, having her in charge, and this time his duty would not be boggled!

They had left the mine on their return and were cantering along at a fair gait through the foothill cañons, when all at once every horse of the escort reared and stumbled in the trail as a sharp crackle of rifle shots jarred the air and a thin wreath of bluish-white smoke curled up from the surrounding thicket. Another crackle and the Widow felt herself snatched from the saddle just as her horse, too, went down, and in another instant found herself lying prone on the ground, where she had been unceremoniously thrown by the Sergeant, who bent above her with the battle glare glittering in his eyes.

"Lie still — on your life!" he ordered sharply. "It's an ambuscade and they've got us foul. I must look to my men."

Two of them, alas! were beyond his care, but the others, though in sore plight, struggled bravely out from under their dead horses in time to assist in checking the exultant rush of the "Kid" and his whooping band, who, imagining all the men to be dead and the unhorsed Widow at their mercy, foolishly uncovered themselves to the scorching wrath of the Springfields. Their indiscretion cost them dear, for the breechloaders were hot by the time they regained cover and a dozen riderless ponies were galloping madly about in confusion. It was all over in five minutes, but to the Widow, with the fear of death in her heart, it seemed half a lifetime.

"We must get out of this," said the Sergeant in the breathing spell which ensued. "If we can make that knoll yonder we have a chance. It's the woman and our guns they are after. I hate to leave those boys, but it can't be helped. Get their arms and ammunition and cover me while I make a run for it with the woman. Luckily the chaparral is thick."

Picking her up as easily as a feather, despite her generous weight, he crept and ran alternately, all the while shielding her

body with his own, and luckily gained the desired vantage without a scratch. Then he in turn covered his men's retreat and a council of war was held.

"We must get a messenger to the fort — but how," was the conclusion. It was odds that the Indians would not attempt another rush after that bitter lesson, but it was equally certain that they would surround that knoll — and escape was doubtful. It was a blazing hot day in June and already were they tormented by the heat and thirst. The wounded men were rapidly weakening from loss of blood and soon would be practically *hors du combat*.

"You fellows will soon be out of the game," said Dickey bluntly, "and the woman would be left alone if I went. Does either one of you think he could last to the fort if I got him a horse? I must stay here and take care of her."

Stainsbury, who had only three holes in him, opined that he could "make it," and an Indian pony which had become entangled in the thicket below was soon secured. Under cover of a furious fusillade the gallant trooper cut his way through the thin cordon of redskins and was soon beyond their reach, killing his horse by inches on his other errand of mercy.

"Now we'll get it, plenty quick!" said the Sergeant grimly as he saw the success of his comrade's attempt. "They'll try to do us up before help comes and we've got to fix for them. Here!" curtly to the Widow, "help me throw up a breastwork of rock; they'll come from all quarters. No — you lay still and rest," to the wounded trooper; "keep what little life's in you to shoot with when the time comes. Mrs. McCann, get a move on you! There's no time to spare."

Mechanically the Widow obeyed this masterful commander and together they soon piled a circular rampart around them a scant foot high. "Now, d—— them!" said Dickey, with a gasp of breathless relief, "let them come!" Then he crawled over to Briggs and laying a loaded revolver within easy reach, said in a hoarse whisper, perfectly audible to the strained hearing of the Widow from its labored utterance, "For the woman, you understand — at the very last!" Briggs turned white but nodded slowly, not looking in her direction. After a careful inspection

of its working order, Dickey laid another convenient to his hand and then turned to her.

"Mrs. McCann, life is getting short and we've not much time for monkeying. You're a soldier's woman all over and if we get out of this I want you — I'll have you, too, my dear! The chances are against us and the worst may come. At any rate we'll say good-by now — for here they come!" and before she divined his intention he kissed her once, twice, thrice full on the rosy mouth, and then picked up his rifle.

The Widow looked at the shrieking, shooting death closing in upon them — then she glanced at the reserved revolvers and shuddered. The reds were close up now and she gave an involuntary moan of fear. With a sudden inspiration she picked up one of the dead men's revolvers and knelt down beside the Sergeant, who gave her a quick nod of admiring approbation. The next second his rifle spoke sharply, followed by an echo from Briggs's side, and three minutes afterward the Widow dropped her empty weapon and wondered that she was alive.

"One more repulse like that," said Dickey hopefully, wiping the blood from a flesh wound in his forehead, "and we've got 'em licked. Mrs. Dickey, my dear, you're a daisy! And Briggs, old man, you're al–l right!"

But no answering acknowledgment came from the other side of the breastwork. The Widow was stooping over the fainting trooper whose rifle had slipped from his nerveless grasp. Dickey drew his breath sharply and laid the reserved pistol a little nearer to his hand as he saw the red line of horsemen forming again on the plain below.

"This settles it," he said through his clenched teeth. "God — if she were only at the Fort and I had a corporal's guard behind me! Katy, dear" — and here his voice was a broken sob of entreaty — "if they reach the breastwork *turn your back to me!*"

She looked at him piteously, but nodded with streaming eyes. He held out his arms in a last entreating farewell, and the Widow tottered towards him. Just at that supreme moment — oh! blessed sound — came the cheery ring of a bugle and the smashing rattle of five-score carbines. It was "B" troop returning from its

unsuccessful chase of Geronimo, and, attracted by the firing, had come just in time.

"Widow McCann — that is to be Mrs. Dickey in the morning," were the uncompromising words of his salutation as the Sergeant stepped across her cosy threshold that night, "have you aught befitting in the house with which to celebrate your fortunate escape from — from celibacy?"

The Widow blushed rosy red, tried to assume a dignified hauteur and failed signally. Then, looking from the bandage on his head to the revolver that he still unconsciously carried at his hip she — remembered!

"Patsy," she said meekly, with a world of tender submission in her voice, "there's a jug of McBrayer on the sideboard. Mix mine with water — a little more whisky than water. And if I don't take it, Patsy — make me take it!"

The Mysterious Mirror.*

BY HARRISON GRAVES.

ATE in January, a few years ago, I was married to the girl whom I thought, and still think, the most charming and beautiful in all the world. On the afternoon of our marriage day we started on a long, leisurely journey through the South, intending later to cross to Cuba and remain there until the extreme heat of the summer should necessitate our returning. The eve of the Mardi Gras festival found us in New Orleans after a lazy ride upon a steamboat from Memphis.

The picturesque scenes ever before our eyes filled us with keen delight. The hotels were crowded with Northerners, and in the streets were a host of planters, negroes gaily dressed, Mexicans, and lively creoles. Luckily I had written some weeks previous for apartments which I had occupied once before upon a similar occasion, and we experienced none of the annoyances incident to packed hotels. The house where we were to stay was a long, irregular, straggling mansion, set back from the street upon the Bayou St. Jean. Along the front ran a wide veranda supported by round brick pillars, now somewhat crumbled, on which rose-vines massed in wild luxuriance. It was a house of the old city, which, being abandoned, had fallen into decay. Ten years before an old, white-haired creole had patched up one end of it, drying the rooms and furnishing them comfortably. As the building was piped for gas, and the old man had put in electric bells, it was just the romantic sort of a place I loved.

When the carriage which had brought us from the wharf had departed and we were walking up the old stone walk, my wife squeezed my arm and said it was just such a place as she had dreamed of while reading romances. No attempt had ever been made to mend the garden and it had become a riot of vegetation.

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Great massive trees rose, spreading over all the yard. Along the ground and on the broken walls blazed flowers from which heavy perfume filled the air. Fruit trees, gnarled and twisted, made impenetrable thickets; and beyond them the waters of the bayou glimmered in the sunlight. A heavy, listless feeling pervaded it all, as my wife said, like a dream of a lotus-eater.

The larger part of the mansion, untouched by the present owner, remained in the same dilapidated state in which he had found it. A sense of potential mystery lurked in the dark, low passages and damp, mouldy rooms. But since the old creole, Mait' Favreau, told us himself that that part of the house was solidly locked and the windows barred, I smiled when my wife looked down one passage that ran from our hall into it, and told her there was nothing to fear. The house had not even the reputation of sheltering spooks.

The afternoon we spent in driving about the city, already gay in anticipation of the evening when King Komo should come with his Krewe. We were both in excellent spirits at dinner and in high humor over the bowing, smiling negro who served it. Later, we were to view the gorgeous pageant, and attend afterward the opening ball of Komo's three days' reign. Consequently, upon finishing dessert, we began dressing immediately in order that we should miss nothing of the entertainment.

Of the suite which we had, one of the rooms served as a dressing room, and its dainty little mahogany table and long pier-glass had caused my wife upon entering it to burst into rapturous exclamations. The mirror was as beautiful as any I had ever seen. It was old, how old he did not know, Mait' Favreau had said, when we first stood in the room. It had been brought from France a century before from some chateau, by the Frenchman's daughter who had married and come here to live. Not a flaw could be discovered in its whole surface, and his father, who had served in the mansion in earlier days, had told him that once he had seen something wonderful in it, something that had not been reflected. But what, the old man concluded, shaking his head, his father would not tell. He feared gossip. Bah! That was a story to scare children, he added.

The room next to it, and the front one of the apartments, looked out of the house where the tangled garden lay, and down the street.

This street ended at the wall of the garden, for the bayou had made further advance impossible, and from the window we could look along the street for several squares to where it joined at right angles one of the busier thoroughfares.

After finishing our dinner we entered the dressing-room to dress for the evening. Upon one of the little tables, covered with a piece of Mexican drawn-work, my wife laid the jewels she was to wear at the ball. The chief of these was a magnificent necklace of pearls, given her upon her wedding-day by her father; and beside this she placed my own gift of a diamond clasp, and three or four rings, among them a large, heart-shaped opal, burning with incessant changes of rainbow color. When she took this last from her jewel case, she pursed her lips thoughtfully for a moment, and then said she did not know whether to wear it. It would bring bad luck, she knew, for whenever she had worn it before something had always happened.

"Yes," I laughed, "Didn't you have it on when I asked you to marry me?"

"The idea!" she exclaimed, "I had on only a turquoise. Well, I'll wear it. It's such a beauty — but lock the door, dear. This old house — who knows?" She continued, opening her eyes ominously, "and then there are darkies around."

I laughed again. But she persisted, and I locked the door leading from our rooms into the hall. A small transom, above the dressing-room door, I closed, but as there was no screw attached to the rod I could not fasten it more securely. This caused her some unrest, until I pointed out that not even a child could crawl through it.

We began to chat once more of the ball and the carnival. After a while there drifted through the windows of the other room the noise of the first revelers and the crash of a band. We both rushed to the front, like excited children. At the interval where the thoroughfare joined our quiet street we could see the flare of torches and dark, moving figures, a jumble of people and lights.

As we watched, a sudden, chill breath of air from the room behind struck upon our necks, and the gas-jets fluttered. Our eyes met instinctively, and we stood for an instant wondering, for the air that floated through the window was sweet and balmy.

A fresh burst of music and an augmentation of the procession of lights drove everything but thoughts of these from our minds. Our hearts beat high from sheer prospect of the fun, and we chattered nonsense until we laughed at our own foolishness.

"But come!" I cried finally. "There is our carriage and we must finish dressing." For at that instant the one which I had ordered pulled up, clattering, before the gate. We turned back to the dressing-room. My wife, who preceded me, gave a scream and cried "I knew it! I knew it would bring bad luck!"

The jewels were gone. Even the beautiful piece of Mexican linen upon which they were spread had vanished. The tears crept out of her eyes and down her cheeks in spite of my reassuring words. Hunt as we would, not a trace of the missing gems could be found.

A systematic search showed the doors still locked and bolted. The transom, however, which I remembered distinctly having closed, was open again. I remembered now the cool gust of air about our necks as we stood at the windows and the sudden fanning of the gas jets. But who could crawl through such an opening? The idea was preposterous.

At the vigorous ring of the bell which I gave, the Negro came shuffling up. I demanded Mait' Favreau; the servant disappeared. Soon the old creole himself stood bowing in the door. When I told him of our loss, his eyebrows went up, his lips in, and his hands out.

"Impossible!" he exclaimed. "And in my house! Mon Dieu!"

"It is possible," I retorted, "since it has happened."

"It is a mistake. They have been mislaid."

I explained at length, and together we went over it all, the jewels, the bolted door and the transom. Finally, he called his household, who all crowded into the room, from his nephew to the colored children of the kitchen. An aged Southern gentleman and his wife, who were in the house, with polite curiosity followed and inquired our misfortune. Upon learning it they sympathized with us, and suggested a search of the "niggahs." But of it all nothing resulted. Finally the matter was reported to the police.

Though low-spirited, I insisted on our carrying out the evening's programme. The gaiety of the carnival and the ball drove away our depression for the time, but on our return the cloud once more

descended upon our spirits. A police officer and a detective, who had carried on an examination during our absence, waited upon us and obtained our story of the disappearance of the jewels. Though non-committal it was evident that they were at sea in the matter.

Neither the next day, nor all the days of the succeeding week, furnished a solution. Reporters haunted the premises; detectives from headquarters waited and watched and waited; curious strangers stared through the gate and speculated. Still nothing came of it. Mait' Favreau, worn and worried, came to our rooms a hundred times; his nephew was solicitous, and anxious to assist us in our search; the whisperings of the servants could be heard in our hall; the genial Southron and his wife each morning paid their respects and made their courteous inquiries, but the mystery remained still a mystery.

The evening before we departed from the city my wife retired, exhausted by the strain. I stayed on in the dressing-room, smoking, and obstinately thinking it over in a vain attempt to catch some thread, some clue, that would lead to an explanation and to a recovery of the gems. The room was unlighted, and the door stood wide open into the dark hall to let the smoke from my cigar drift out. I lay back in a reclining chair, staring into the long pier-glass mirror which hung upon the wall opposite the door. The glow of my cigar was reflected with each puff I took until finally, finishing it, I dropped it upon an ash-tray. The minutes passed slowly, and I heard far away a city clock strike the midnight hour. All the house was still; only the lonesome cry of a nightbird somewhere out upon the bayou sounded faintly.

My mind, wearied with intense thought, relaxed, and gradually I became conscious of a point of light, sharp and shining, in the middle of the black mirror. In quick reaction I once more focused my thoughts to explain this speck of light which stood out so clearly in the darkness. I stared and stared until my eyes ached — then, suddenly, this strange thing happened: The point of light grew less sharp and began to expand. Diffusing a soft glow about its rim, it spread until there stood a disk of light, wide as the mirror itself. As I watched, the faint outline of a hand etched itself into the light, illusive at first, but growing constantly more real until

at last it seemed as if of flesh. Stretching out from the darkness, this hand lay upon a table, and upon one finger burned the rainbow opal of my wife. Its fires glowed and smouldered as clearly as though I myself held it. Beside the finger tips, in careless twists, lay the necklace of pearls. And near the thumb, shooting a hundred flames, I saw my own gift of diamonds. But there was something else — something upon the hand, black and ugly, that held my eyes fixed. A little shudder crept cold over my body and I awoke with a half laugh, but shivered instinctively. It had all seemed so tangible that for a moment I could not realize the truth that I had only been dreaming. The mirror still held its point of light, and in an instant I knew that I had been self-hypnotized. I had seen the same thing occur in public performances under the direction of a hypnotist. My reclining position, my upturned eyes fastened upon the light, and the gradually tiring optic nerves had accomplished it easily enough. But the light!

Like an inspiration it came to me that this bright speck, clear and deep in the blackness of the glass, was a reflection. The mirror was squarely before the open door and low, dark passage that ran into the uninhabited part of the old mansion. A crowd of possibilities flooded my mind. I felt, with all the force of my mysterious revelation, that I was on the track of the jewels.

Rising and feeling for matches in the pocket of my smoking-jacket, I went stealthily out of the room and down the low, musty passage. Carefully feeling my way I went forward until my finger touched a door. Stare as I would, no ray of light, such as I knew had made the reflection, rewarded me. I had been low down in my chair, I remembered. The keyhole, of course, and as I stooped to it the anticipated gleam flashed in my eye.

Mastering as well as I was able the terror of nervousness which seized me, I tried the door lightly. It gave way, and in an instant I stood within the lighted room. The sight which greeted my eyes brought me up with a jerk. My thumping heart, I felt sure, would wake the man who sat sleeping at the table, his head upon his outstretched arms.

A sparkle of red and purple played before me on the table, and there I beheld the hand of my dream — with the opal and pearls and the diamond brooch. And there, too, upon his hand, squatted

the ugly thing which had made me shiver. It was then that the sweeping horror of the truth struck me. The man was dead. His murderer, the swollen spider, crouched against his hand, large as a coin, with eyes peering sharply at me from a purple body that bore upon its back a furry, yellow cross.

While gloating over his booty, the thief, who proved to be a nephew of Mait' Favreau, had evidently fallen asleep and, bitten by this poisonous insect, had passed into the deeper sleep of death. Now the spider waited by his prey. The necklace still lay against the man's white fingers and the diamonds still quivered and leaped with light.

A jointed fishing-pole, well wrapped with plush, and a stout step-ladder explained the mystery of the transom. For one with a steady, skilful hand, it had not been difficult to fish for the Mexican linen, catching the hook first in one embroidered edge, and then the other, and, with the jewels within its fold, lift it easily to one's possession.

In Dead Man's Cañon.*

BY EDGAR WELTON COOLEY.

ITH an effort that sent a paroxysm of pain through him the man rolled over upon his side and cast one desperate, hopeless glance up the sheer white face of the precipice that rose three thousand feet and pressed its pinnacles against the sky. Not a crevice or jutting point of rock gave promise of a foothold or hiding-place.

Then a spasm of agony and despair crossed the man's face and he bowed his head upon his arms and hugged his misery to his heart. As slight as his movement had been, the red gushed forth anew from the jagged hole in his side where the Apache's bullet had gnawed his flesh, and with fast weakening fingers he clutched a handful of dew-wet leaves and pressed them to the wound. Then he lay for a long time, flat upon his face, motionless, listening.

The sun poured its wealth of scorching brilliancy into the cañon — not a feathery cloud dimmed its lustre. The breeze whispered amid the pine trees across the river, and the eddying tide rushed past unceasingly. High overhead an eagle circled slowly. No other living creature was visible.

In this wild, lonely tabernacle of Nature and of God, Peace seemed to have found an eternal hiding-place, but the man, with his parching lips pressed against the cooling grasses, knew that every tuft of waving verdure might conceal the painted form and shining eyes of an Apache, whose copper-colored hands rested upon the lock of a deadly rifle, invented by a white man's brain, fashioned by white man's skill and used for white man's annihilation.

The dew-damp leaves staunched the flow of blood from his side and, little by little, his strength revived. But he did not, dare

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not, move, for death lurked on every hand. So he lay, as motionless as a dead man, amid the rank and tangled grass — thinking of a woman.

And his thoughts made him fill his mouth with leaves to stifle the groan that swelled up from his heart. In the autumn he was to have gone back to her. Four years of prospecting in Arizona had brought him a wealth of gold — and that ghastly hole in his side! And this was the end! The end of the woman's waiting — the end of his longing to go back. But how, when, would she ever learn of his death? White men seldom come into Dead Man's Cañon. And if one should, he would not be likely to stumble upon the heap of white bones here in this jungle of grass.

Thirst was burning in his veins. God! how hot the sun was. He must have water — water!

Not twenty feet from where he lay a sparkling crystal river, cold as the snow-capped mountain peaks, flowed by. Its constant murmuring was music to his ears — maddening music, for a score of Indians might be hidden between him and the water's brink.

But he must have drink. His lips were parched and cracked — his tongue was swollen — his veins were on fire. He peered through the grass before him — he saw a glint of light upon the river's surface. Perhaps — perhaps!

Slowly, painfully, so carefully that not the faintest sound was caused by the movement of his body, he dragged himself forward. An eighth of an inch a second — a foot in a minute and a half — he moved, the pace of a snail, and he was dying of thirst!

Ten feet, twelve feet, fifteen feet, he crept. Through the quivering verdure he could see the sunlight glistening upon the shimmering river; in his ears the torrent's roar was deafening; mist from the dashing waves moistened his brow.

Carefully he reached forth his hand and parted a bunch of grass before him; then he drew his hand back quickly and flattened himself upon the ground. For, just beyond that little tuft of verdure, so near that the man could touch him with his fingers, an Apache warrior lay, his naked body gleaming like burnished copper, his black hair falling like dark shadows down his painted neck and broad shoulders!

The savage was lying upon his face, his rifle thrust through the

grasses before him, his eyes riveted upon the bank of the stream. With infinite patience he was waiting, watching for the writhing body of a wounded man, whose delirium and fever would cause him to be lured to death by the singing of the ripples.

Gazing through the intervening grasses at his silent, relentless foe, the man drew a revolver from his belt and raised it to the level of his eye. The little projection on the end of the shining barrel pointed directly at the base of the Indian's brain, and the man's fingers closed slowly, steadily upon the trigger. A sudden tremor passed through the Indian; then he lay quite still again and the man lowered his pistol. He had but that one cartridge left, and its voice would call a hundred painted devils upon him!

So he stretched, like a shadow, amid the grass, not moving so much as a finger, breathing into the turf and gritting his teeth over the agony in his throat which the river, singing in his ears, could alleviate.

The wind strengthened, and the whispering amid the pines increased to a shriek. The fever in the man's veins crept into his eyes, and balls of fire seemed floating in the air about him. Delirium fastened its fingers upon his brain and he fought it off madly.

An impulse to make his presence known to the savage, and thus invite death, seized him. For, after all, why prolong his agony? Earth, sky, river, rock or air afforded no means of escape. No human help was within a hundred miles. And yet — death at the hands of an Apache!

Then a sudden thought came to the man and a faint smile quivered upon his lips. Silently he raised once more the pistol in his hand and pressed its chilly muzzle against his hot temple.

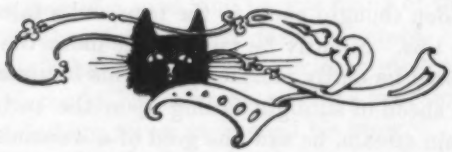
But, in the sheen of sunlight falling upon the turbulent bosom of the mountain stream, he saw the gold of a woman's hair, and in the tranquil azure of the Arizona sky he saw the tender blue of a woman's eyes, and he let the weapon drop upon the ground. And after that he lay, as in a daze, listening to the singing of the river.

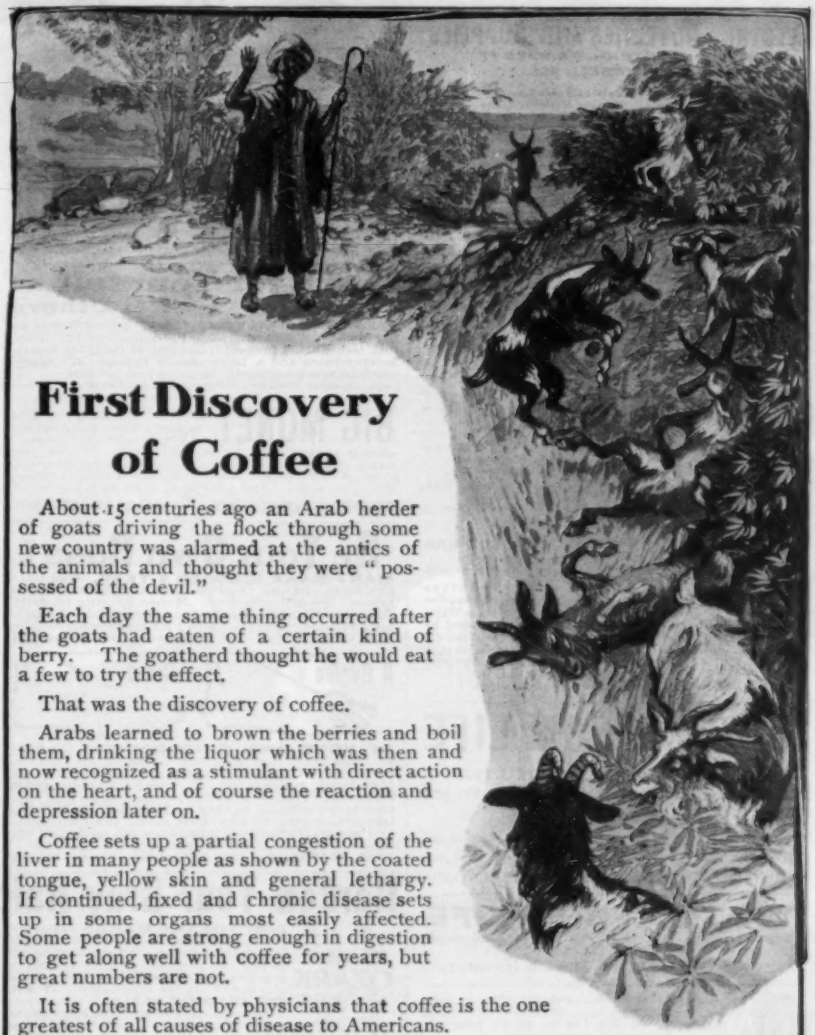
And as he listened he seemed to see a white farmhouse far up in the New England hills, and a sweet-faced woman standing in the twilight, watching for some one.

Suddenly he was aroused by a rustle in the grass in front of him. He raised his head a trifle and saw the Apache leap to his feet and skulk away through the grass. Then, upon the parched air there was borne to him the hoof-beats of many horses, and a moment later he was standing knee deep in the grass, gazing with mouth agape and eyes staring at a long file of cavalrymen, in the blue of the nation, approaching along the narrow trail that followed the course of the river, at their head, its silken folds flapping defiantly in the breeze, the American flag.

Slowly, alertly, the cavalrymen rode along the almost invisible path, each with his carbine ready for instant use and each with his eyes searching the brush and the undergrowth for gleaming rifle or tufted head.

And suddenly, in rounding a sharp turn in the trail, they saw the man. His face was pallid, his eyes were feverishly bright, his clothes were clotted with blood. He was standing in the sparkling tide, dipping up the water in his hands. And, as the soldiers approached, he raised his torn cap and the walls of Dead Man's Cañon echoed and re-echoed his thankful voice.





First Discovery of Coffee

About 15 centuries ago an Arab herder of goats driving the flock through some new country was alarmed at the antics of the animals and thought they were "possessed of the devil."

Each day the same thing occurred after the goats had eaten of a certain kind of berry. The goatherd thought he would eat a few to try the effect.

That was the discovery of coffee.

Arabs learned to brown the berries and boil them, drinking the liquor which was then and now recognized as a stimulant with direct action on the heart, and of course the reaction and depression later on.

Coffee sets up a partial congestion of the liver in many people as shown by the coated tongue, yellow skin and general lethargy. If continued, fixed and chronic disease sets up in some organs most easily affected. Some people are strong enough in digestion to get along well with coffee for years, but great numbers are not.

It is often stated by physicians that coffee is the one greatest of all causes of disease to Americans.

Anyone can easily prove whether it be coffee that causes the periodical headaches, sick stomach, bowel troubles, weak heart, kidney complaint, weak eyes, neuralgia, rheumatism or nervous prostration.

Simply leave it off entirely for 10 days, and that's easy when you can have a piping hot rich cup of POSTUM with the coffee color and a crisp coffee snap (if well made according to the directions on the package).

If you find, in a day or two, that you are getting better, that's your cue, follow it straight back to health, comfort and the power to do things.

POSTUM FOOD COFFEE, 10 days, **"There's a Reason."**